

REMARKS

Claims 7 and 18 have been canceled; therefore, claims 1-6, 8-17, and 19-24 are pending, of which claims 8-14 have been allowed. Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims of this application in light of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 8-14 are allowed.

Claims 4-7 and 18-24 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner has indicated that those claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicants have canceled claims 7 and 18 and have rewritten claims 1 and 15 to include all of the limitations of claims 7 and 18, respectively, thereby placing claims 1 and 15 in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the objection to claims 4-6 and 19-24 be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-3 and 15-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. US 2003/0125832 A1 to Nakashima (hereinafter “Nakashima”). In response, as previously indicated, Applicants have canceled claims 7 and 18, which were objected to, and have rewritten claims 1 and 15, respectively, to include all of the limitations thereof, thereby placing claims 1 and 15 in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the subject rejection of claims 1 and 15, as well as claims 2, 3, and 16 dependent therefrom, be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakashima in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. US 2004/0193300 A1 to Rice (hereinafter “Rice”). In response, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that, because claim 17 depends from and further limits independent claim 15, the claim is allowable for at least the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 15.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

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Customer No. 42717
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RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE - GROUP ART UNIT 2125
Response to Final Official Action dated September 6, 2006

Conclusion

All pending claims in the application are now deemed to be in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed in detail above. In view of the foregoing, an early formal notice of allowance of the claims is requested. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,


Brandi W. Sarfatis

Registration No. 37,713

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HAYNES AND BOONE, LLP
901 Main Street, Suite 3100
Dallas, Texas 75202-3789
Telephone: 214/651-5896
Facsimile: 214/200-0853
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Bonnie Boyle
Bonnie Boyle